

The Safety Manager's Partnership: How 5 Years of Supervisor Development Transformed NBU's Culture

A Case Study in Long-Term Leadership Development ROI

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Executive Summary

New Braunfels Utilities recently surveyed 400 employees, generating 1,413 responses about their workplace experience after five years with the PeopleWork Supervisor Academy.

The results: NBU employees aren't saying "we're done." They're requesting *more* development, *higher* communication standards, and *enhanced* leadership support.

The validation: Billy Shearer, Safety Manager, just committed to three additional years, stating: *"Our company has worked the PeopleWork Supervisor program for five years now, and we have committed to three more. A testament to how much of a difference these programs have made for our people and culture."*

Key Results:

- 85% employee participation in retention discussions
- 80% participation in identifying positive changes
- 78% provided leadership support recommendations
- 74% shared work fulfillment insights
- 25% provided detailed general feedback
- Continued appetite for development despite 5 years of training
- Safety Manager extends partnership 3 additional years

Why NBU Chose the PeopleWork Supervisor Academy

The Traditional Training Problem

Like many organizations, NBU had experienced the limitations of conventional supervisor training:

- **"Fix and forget" mentality:** One-time training events with no follow-up
- **Operational disruption:** Taking supervisors away from work for full-day sessions
- **Generic content:** Training not tailored to their operational realities
- **No reinforcement:** Skills forgotten without ongoing support
- **Separate safety focus:** Leadership and safety treated as unrelated topics

NBU's Requirements

Billy Shearer and NBU leadership needed an approach that would:

- Develop supervisors without disrupting operations
- Provide sustained development, not one-time events
- Integrate leadership skills with safety culture
- Create measurable, lasting cultural change
- Respect the time constraints of a working utility

The Academy Solution

The PeopleWork Supervisor Academy addressed every concern:

- **Micro-learning format:** 5-7 minute daily videos fit operational schedules
- **58-week structure:** Sustained development vs. one-time training
- **Safety integration:** 52 Benefits of Safety component connected leadership to safety culture
- **Practical application:** Skills used immediately at work
- **Community support:** Peer learning through live coaching sessions

This is why NBU committed to the Academy—it solved problems that traditional training couldn't address.

NBU's Five-Year Journey

Organization Profile

- **Industry:** Municipal Utilities (400 employees)
- **Academy Start:** 2020
- **Safety Leadership:** Billy Shearer, Safety Manager
- **Current Status:** 5 years completed, 3-year extension committed

Survey Results: What Success Looks Like

Comprehensive Employee Engagement Across Six Categories:

Participation Rates:

- 85% responded about retention factors (342 employees)
- 80% identified positive organizational changes (320 responses)
- 78% provided leadership support recommendations (312 responses)
- 74% shared work fulfillment insights (296 responses)
- 25% provided detailed general feedback (99 responses)
- 11% suggested innovation improvements (44 responses)

Employee Feedback on Positive Changes:

- "Better leadership"
- "More fulfilling work"
- "Training and development programs"
- "A commitment to accountability and retention"
- "Positive changes in department leadership"
- "Open and frequent communication with team members"
- "A purposeful effort to balance work and life"

Cont'd...

Leadership Support Requests:

- "3 or 6 month check-ins with your supervisor would be helpful"
- "More communication, as I am just starting my career"
- "Allowing and trusting supervisors to work with their teams"
- "A centralized task & project list"

Work Fulfillment Opportunities:

- "A more collaborative environment, allowing brainstorming"
- "Additional staff and resources to focus on bigger-picture issues"
- "Accept that some people may be in unique leadership roles"
- "A more defined role"

Retention Factor Insights:

- "The hybrid & flex schedule"
 - "I work in a positive work environment"
 - "A positive and non-toxic environment is paramount"
 - "The team I work with and how much I enjoy working at NBU"
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The Academy's Impact on NBU Culture**Before Academy Implementation**

- Employees accepted basic supervision
- Communication gaps went unnoticed
- Leadership development wasn't expected
- Problems were endured rather than addressed

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After 5 Years with Academy

- Employees request "3 or 6 month check-ins with supervisors"
- Clear expectations for communication and transparency
- Development seen as essential
- Proactive improvement suggestions replace reactive complaints

Operational Integration Success

Employee Quote: *"It is great to see more training opportunities, however, we are so squeezed thin that it is hard to find the time."*

Yet these same employees request MORE development.

The Academy's micro-learning approach (5-7 minute daily videos) delivered growth without disrupting operations. NBU employees experienced the benefits of continuous learning while maintaining their demanding utility work schedules.

Analysis: Employees who experienced five years of improvement now expect even higher standards. This isn't dissatisfaction—it's cultural evolution.

Why Billy Shearer's Endorsement Matters

As Safety Manager, Billy Shearer evaluates programs based on measurable results and cultural improvement. His decision to extend the partnership validates that:

- Supervisor leadership directly impacts safety culture
- Communication skills drive safety engagement
- Long-term development generates measurable ROI
- Leadership development IS safety development

When a safety professional commits to continue after five years of proven results, it demonstrates sustained value creation. Safety managers don't extend partnerships unless they see concrete improvements in both culture and performance.

NBU's Measurable Results

Cultural Engagement Indicators

- **85% survey participation** demonstrates trust and psychological safety
- **320 employees identifying positive changes** shows widespread impact
- **Continued development requests** indicate sustainable culture shift
- **Multi-category feedback** reveals comprehensive transformation

Leadership Evolution at NBU

- From criticism to coaching approaches
- From commands to communication focus
- From compliance to engagement mindset
- From problem-fixing to excellence-building culture

Safety Culture Integration

NBU's safety culture benefited as supervisors learned to communicate more effectively, coach rather than command, and build trust with their teams. The Academy's 52 Benefits of Safety component helped supervisors connect their leadership development directly to safety performance.

Operational Benefits

- **Zero disruption:** Training happened without taking supervisors off the job
 - **Immediate application:** Skills were used the same day they were learned
 - **Sustained engagement:** 58-week program created lasting habits
 - **Peer support:** Live coaching built community among supervisors
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The Academy Approach That Delivered NBU's Results

Program Structure (58 weeks total)

- **Weeks 1-8:** The CareFull Supervisor foundation program
- **Weeks 9-58:** Monday Mentor reinforcement + 52 Benefits of Safety
- **Ongoing:** Live coaching and community access

Key Features That Worked for NBU

- **Micro-learning format:** 5-7 minute daily videos
- **Zero operational disruption:** Learn without leaving work
- **Safety integration:** 52 Benefits of Safety component
- **Peer support:** Live coaching and online community
- **Practical focus:** Immediate workplace application

This structure allowed NBU supervisors to develop consistently over more than a year while maintaining their operational responsibilities.

Measuring Long-Term Success: NBU's Evidence

Traditional Training Metrics Focus On:

- Completion rates
- Satisfaction scores
- Knowledge retention
- Short-term behavior change

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NBU's Results Demonstrate:

- **Cultural engagement** (85% survey participation across multiple categories)
- **Elevated expectations** (requests for more development after 5 years)
- **Professional validation** (Safety Manager 3-year extension)
- **Sustained appetite** (continued improvement focus)
- **Comprehensive impact** (positive changes across all survey areas)

NBU demonstrates all indicators of transformational success, not just training completion.

Strategic Implications from NBU's Experience

For Safety Professionals: NBU's experience proves supervisor development is safety development. The Academy's communication and coaching focus directly supports safety engagement and risk reduction.

For Senior Leadership: NBU's 5-year track record with 3-year extension demonstrates that sustained supervisor development generates compound returns through cultural evolution.

For Operations Teams: NBU employees wanted growth that enhanced rather than disrupted productivity. The micro-learning approach delivered both performance improvement and operational efficiency.

Implementation Lessons from NBU's Success

What Worked at NBU

- **Consistent daily engagement:** 5-7 minute videos built sustainable habits
- **Safety integration:** 52 Benefits of Safety connected leadership to safety culture
- **Peer learning:** Live coaching created community support among supervisors
- **Practical application:** Skills were used immediately in daily work situations
- **Leadership champion:** Billy Shearer's support ensured program success

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Key Success Factors from NBU's Experience

- **Leadership commitment:** Billy Shearer championed the program from day one
- **Operational respect:** No disruption to daily utility operations
- **Cultural patience:** Allowed evolution to happen over time
- **Measurement focus:** Tracked engagement and cultural change, not just completion

NBU's Advice for Other Organizations

The high survey participation rates and quality of feedback demonstrate that NBU employees trust their leadership and feel safe providing honest input—a clear indicator of the cultural transformation the Academy helped create.

Conclusion

NBU's five-year journey with the PeopleWork Supervisor Academy reveals that effective leadership development doesn't end problems—it transforms culture and creates appetite for continuous improvement.

Billy Shearer's decision to extend the partnership three additional years validates that sustained supervisor development creates lasting competitive advantage. For NBU, leadership development became safety culture development.

The result: An organization where 85% of employees actively engage in improvement discussions and continuously raise their expectations for leadership excellence.

The validation: A Safety Manager who sees measurable value in extending the partnership because supervisor development directly impacts safety culture and operational performance.

The future: NBU continues building on five years of success with three more years of Academy partnership, demonstrating that cultural transformation is an ongoing journey, not a destination.

About PeopleWork Supervisor Academy

The PeopleWork Supervisor Academy transforms frontline leaders through 58 weeks of practical development delivered via micro-learning, live coaching, and peer community support. The program respects operational realities while creating cultural transformation.

The Academy's unique integration of leadership development with safety culture enhancement makes it particularly valuable for utilities, manufacturing, construction, and industrial organizations where supervisor effectiveness directly impacts both performance and safety.

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About New Braunfels Utilities

New Braunfels Utilities serves Texas communities with electric, water, and wastewater services. Under Safety Manager Billy Shearer's leadership, NBU has demonstrated excellence in both service delivery and employee development through their partnership with the PeopleWork Supervisor Academy.

NBU's commitment to continuous improvement is evidenced by their comprehensive employee engagement surveys and their decision to extend their Academy partnership for three additional years based on proven results.

Based on actual employee survey data from New Braunfels Utilities' 2024 Gallup engagement survey: 1,413 responses from 400 employees across six categories.